

**COLORADO CANYONS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA**  
**Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**  
**June 5, 2003**

Attendees:

Ken Currey	Sue Benjamin	Megan Kram	Eric Rechel
Doralyn Genova	B. Boeschenstein	Jo Levy	C. Robertson
Greg Gnesios	Kathleen Clarke	Dave Lehmann	Jane Ross
Warren Gore	John Craig	Mel Lloyd	Lynn Rust
Joe Keys	Kris Hjelle	R. Meysenburg	John Silence
Bob Silbernagel	Wade Johnson	Erin McIntyre	Ron Wenker
Russ Walker	Chris Jouflas	Brian Olson	Palma Wilson
Linda Anania	Charles Kerr	Joyce Olson	Steve Yamashita
Gene Arnesen	Kit Kimball	Mike Perry	

**Greetings and Introductions**

Chairman Warren Gore called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

**BLM Update**

Greg Gnesios, Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area (CCNCA) Manager, welcomed everyone to today's meeting and provided a brief background on the planning process and its status. The staff is in the process of analyzing the impacts, and the core of the Resource Management Plan (RMP) is being developed this summer. An Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) retreat is scheduled for next week and the main objective is to draft the impact analysis of each management alternative.

Greg gave the Advisory Council the choice of holding or canceling the July 3 meeting because of the July 4th holiday and also asked whether the Advisory Council would like to schedule a river trip this summer. The Advisory Council agreed to cancel the July meeting and reconvene on August 7. Because of several new faces present tonight, Greg asked for introductions from the attendees.

**BLM Director**

Special guest Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Director Kathleen Clarke was introduced, and the Advisory Council in turn introduced themselves.

Greg presented his slide show, which features the CCNCA's outstanding resources. Greg also touched on the issues facing the BLM in preserving the CCNCA's values for future generations.

Director Clarke expressed her amazement at how well the community has come together to work on this RMP. Director Clarke emphasized that the land and resources do not belong to the BLM but to the public, and the Advisory Council is here representing that public. Citizen stewardship is key, and with the great contribution of the Grand Junction staff, the Advisory Council's work makes her job as Director easier. These individuals who have come together are excellent models for others to follow. Director Clarke stressed that she is here to listen to the Advisory Council and is very impressed with their contributions to BLM.

Bob Silbernagel asked about funding for furthering conservation efforts in the CCNCA.

The Director explained that the budget is tight for the Bureau as a whole. The BLM manages 262 million acres of public land with about 10,000 employees and receives about \$3.33 per acre to manage that land. This is compared to some agencies that receive over \$7 per acre. The Director finds it impressive that the BLM gets the job done with what its employees have to work with. The Director added that fine-tuning the Bureau's performance is the goal, and because of President Bush's MBA and business background, positive end results are expected.

Director Clarke feels that Congress's designating the CCNCA and then entrusting its management to the BLM says a lot about the Bureau. The Washington office is trying to simplify processes to make the most of funds.

The Director was asked whether she had any discretionary power, and Director Clarke stated that the Secretary of the Interior's 4 C's philosophy of "communication, cooperation, and consultation, all in the service of conservation" requires the government to work together not only externally but internally as well. Everyone on Director Clarke's team provides input on the big picture of funding. Director Clarke added that BLM's best opportunities lie with its partnerships and friends groups in finding ways to care for the resources.

In an effort to make a difference in budgeting from Congress, Director Clarke urged the Advisory Council to voice how important BLM is to their Congressmen. Long after the current BLM employees are gone, ownership will lie with the Advisory Council and the public this group represents.

Jane Ross, CCNCA planning team leader, talked about the IDT retreat next week and explained that the entire week will focus on developing the impact analysis that all alternatives would have on all CCNCA resources such as land, water, and vegetation. Jane reported that August 15 is the anticipated date for sending the draft RMP to the printer, with public distribution in early October.

Russ Walker noted that Director Clarke's comments on BLM's lack of constituency compared to how well the CCNCA's collaborative planning process is going should be the ideal situation for generating more funds for the CCNCA staff to work with. Director Clarke stated that she believes in rewarding performance.

Eric Rechel asked about the proposed National Conservation Area (NCA) in the areas of Dominguez and Escalante Canyons. Director Clarke indicated that if the community supports such a proposal, she would have no reason to oppose it. The Bureau's policy seeks to empower local groups and communities, and better decisions are made if all parties are at the table.

Kris Hjelle asked about RS-2477 and the decision in the state of Utah, which could potentially grant rights-of-way into Wilderness areas of Colorado. The Director explained that she probably knows no more than Kris, since she was recused in those discussions because of her previous employment. Director Clarke wants to know what kind of travel management is important, and, ultimately, the issue is what is right for the land. She emphasized that BLM is receiving feedback on this initiative, and a report is due on her desk soon.

Kris also commented on e-mail slamming in relation to the public comment period on draft RMPs and asked whether the BLM had developed a policy yet on how those e-mails would be handled.

The Director indicated that the BLM would issue a policy soon.

On behalf of the Advisory Council, Warren Gore stated that the group was honored to have Director Clarke visit.

The Director again thanked everyone for their efforts and departed the meeting.

Discussions ensued on planning the Advisory Council river trip, and it was decided that the date will be set during the August 7 meeting.

### **Public Comment**

Someone in the audience asked about being approached recently with a survey while in the CCNCA and whether it was related to the IDT retreat next week. Greg indicated that it was not related to the retreat and explained the purpose of the US Geological Survey (USGS) visitor survey. USGS staff are conducting the survey, which focuses on visitor experiences within the CCNCA, as well as attitudes toward a user fee program.

Joe Keys asked about fees and how those would be collected and used. Greg explained that 85 percent of the money would stay in the CCNCA and be used for facility improvements and resource management needs.

Colorado National Monument (COLM) Superintendent Palma Wilson added that fee

programs are only authorized through fiscal year 2004, but legislation is in the works to continue the program. Palma added that the COLM general management plan was presented in Washington recently, and the National Park Service Director has approved their Alternative B. Alternative B emphasizes a close working relationship with local communities, organizations, and other government agencies. Their timeframe for issue should match the CCNCA's RMP schedule. A COLM newsletter will offer more details in July.

Chris Joufflas expressed his pleasure with this Advisory Council's performance and is proud of them.

Greg agreed and also praised Jane Ross for her efforts in the planning process.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.